

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 1-5 and 8-15. Claim 1 has been amended to replace the term "polyolefins" with a specific group of polyolefins. In addition, claim 7 has been canceled, and new claims 14-15 have been added directed to certain preferred embodiments of the invention. The Abstract of the Disclosure has also been amended. Support for the claims may be found, *inter alia*, in the disclosure in the paragraph bridging pages 3 and 4, and the first paragraph of page 5. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

The Abstract of the disclosure was objected to in view of Applicants' April 26, 2004 Preliminary Amendment. In response, Applicants have amended the Abstract to recite that the adhesive layer is formed from a blend of at least one styrene block copolymer and at least one polyolefin. It is respectfully submitted that the Abstract as amended overcomes the Examiner's objection to the Abstract under MPEP §608.01(b), and Applicants respectfully request that the objection on that basis be withdrawn.

The Examiner also suggested that Applicants' claims should be amended in the last line by putting after "and" the phrase --at least one polyolefin-- in place of "polyolefins". In response, Applicants have replaced the term "polyolefins" in claim 1 by a specific recitation of polyolefins to better define the invention as discussed below.

Claims 1-5 and 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over European Patent Application 0 661 364 A2. The remaining claims 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '364. Essentially, the Examiner's position was that EP '364 discloses the self-adhesive surface protection film recited in the claims except for features which were considered as either inherent or within the skill of the art.

In response, as stated above, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite that the adhesive layer includes a mixture of a styrene block copolymer and a polyolefin or a polyolefin mixture selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene and amorphous poly- $\alpha$ -olefins, and respectfully traverses the Examiner's rejection for the following reasons.

As set forth in claim 1 as amended, Applicants' invention provides a self-adhesive surface protection film including a layered laminate containing at least a carrier layer and an adhesive layer. This film is particularly suitable for covering painted sheet metal and high gloss sheet metal made of aluminum or stainless steel.

The adhesive layer includes a mixture of a styrene block copolymer and a polyolefin or a polyolefin mixture selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene, and amorphous poly- $\alpha$ -olefins. The adhesive properties of the adhesive layer are governed by the styrene block copolymer whereas a polyolefin selected from the above-named group is added to reduce the adhesive strength to a predefined value. The named polyolefins are inexpensive, particularly suitable for extrusion, and provide a good bond with a multiplicity of other polymers that might be used for the adjacent layer of the laminate. In this way, Applicants' invention provides a self-adhesive surface protection film that provides a good bond between the layers and can be produced by an inexpensive and variable coextrusion process.

EP '364 fails to disclose or suggest Applicants' self-adhesive surface protection film as recited in amended claim 1. EP '364 relates to a surface protecting film comprising at least a base layer and an adhesive layer. The adhesive layer "is chiefly composed of a copolymer that is based on at least two  $\alpha$ -olefins selected from among  $\alpha$ -olefins having 2-12 carbon atoms." See page 4, lines 19-22 and claim 1 of EP '364.

In a preferred embodiment, the adhesive layer of EP '364 is even composed by a ternary copolymer. See page 4, line 26. The adhesive properties of the adhesive layer of EP '364 are governed by these complicated structured and rather expensive copolymers. The use of an additional  $\alpha$ -olefin component like styrene-diene based copolymers is only optional. As the adhesive properties are governed by "a copolymer that is based on at least two  $\alpha$ -olefins", the amount of an additional  $\alpha$ -olefin component is preferably small.

Accordingly, there is no disclosure or suggestion in EP '364 of Applicants' self-adhesive surface protection film, which includes as an adhesive layer a mixture of a styrene block copolymer and a simple polyolefin or a polyolefin mixture selected from the group consisting of polyethylene, polypropylene

and amorphous poly- $\alpha$ -olefins. None of the compositions of the adhesive layer described in EP '364 includes an admixture of one of these simple polyolefins. Further, a complicated structured and rather expensive copolymer which is necessarily a component of the adhesive layer disclosed in EP '364, is not required in the adhesive layer of Applicants' invention.

Moreover, EP '364 is based on the idea that the adhesive properties are governed by a (polyolefin) copolymer based on at least two  $\alpha$ -olefins. In contrast, Applicants' self-adhesive surface protection film takes a different approach. Applicants' film differs considerably as the polyolefin component does not contribute to a higher adhesive force but rather to a reduction of the adhesive properties. There is no disclosure or suggestion in EP '364 of Applicants' completely different solution for providing a self-adhesive surface protection film. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that EP '364 neither anticipates nor renders obvious Applicants' self-adhesive surface protection film as recited in claim 1 or in dependent claims 2-5 and 8-15.

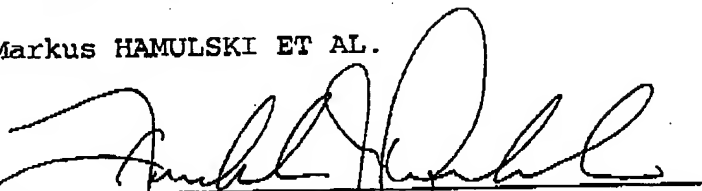
In summary, claim 1 has been amended, claim 7 has been canceled, and new claims 14-15 have been added. The Abstract has also been amended. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully

requested that the claims be allowed and that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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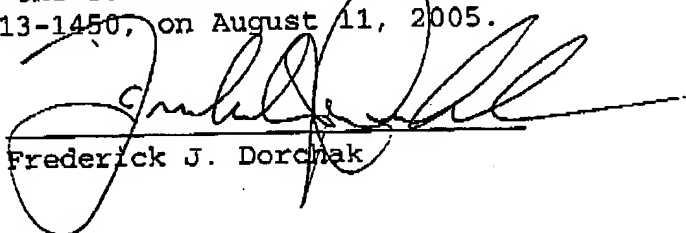
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Enclosure: Abstract of the Disclosure and a copy of a Petition for a one month extension of time.

**CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

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Frederick J. Dorchak

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A self-adhesive surface protection film, particularly for covering painted sheet metal and high-gloss sheet metal made of aluminum or stainless steel, has a layered laminate containing at least a carrier layer and an adhesive layer. The layered laminate is produced by means of coextrusion and the coextruded adhesive layer is formed from a blend of at least one based on polyisobutylene and/or on a styrene block copolymer and at least one polyolefin.